Contents: **Short Stories,** **Poetry,** **Book Reviews**

NORTH Bi NORTHWEST

Newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, a member project of Gay Community Social Services

August/September 1996 $2.50 VOLUME 9, NUMBER 4

Together At Last

By Stacey L. Cooper

Cassandra and Meredith had known each other ever since freshman orientation. Cassandra remembered how they were teamed up together to do some ridiculous scavenger hunt. They introduced themselves and went through the basics-their majors, where they lived, what high school they went to, etc. This was followed by complete silence. The silence felt awkward, so Cassandra felt compelled to keep some sort of the conversation going. There was something about Meredith that Cassandra just felt connected to.

By the end of the day the two of them had discovered that they believed in a lot of the same issues, liked the same music, and they seemed to get along. Cassandra was a little bummed out because they discovered that they didn't have any classes together. They had different majors and almost completely different schedules.

After orientation was over they stood around talking to each other for a bit longer. They were finally able to have a conversation without long dry spells in between. The conversation just flowed from one topic to the next without any hesitation. Cassandra knew that they had hit it off, now she was worried about when they would see each other again.

They did. It was the first day of class and Cassandra wandered into the cafeteria to grab a quick bite and to get a jump start on her homework. She found a nice clean spot to sit down, and she opened her books. She had started to read the first chapter but just wasn't into it. Looking around the cafeteria and didn't see any familiar faces. It was as if everyone knew each other. Cassandra started to feel a little depressed at this thought when someone sat down right in front of her and said hi. Cassandra was thrilled to see that it was Meredith, a familiar face. They immediately started talking about their classes and how great it was to see each other again.

Meredith always seemed to have this power over Cassandra. It wasn't necessarily a controlling power but a power that instilled tranquillity and a sense of calm. Cassandra used to comment to herself that Meredith even had a scent that was soothing, almost like an aroma therapy candle. It was for this reason that Cassandra would make it a habit to visit with Meredith at least once a week while they were in college.

Both Cassandra and Meredith worked on campus in between their classes and always ended up working late on the same nights. So they would always make it a habit to have a chat by the water cooler and eventually move into Meredith's office and talk for a lengthy amount of time. They would suddenly realize the time and finish their work for the day and say good-bye.

Meredith was the only reason Cassandra felt bad about graduating. On her last day at thecollege she wanted to go to

Continued on Page 6

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North Bi Northwest is the bimonthly newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network. It is produced by women and is feminist in content. We feature news and events pertinent to the bisexual community, plus creative writing, artwork, and an advice column.

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We welcome submissions from women and men that concern feminism, politics, sexuality, or anything of interest to bisexual women. Help define our culture! Share your histories, anger, pleasure, energy. Send us your essays, poetry, photographs, drawings, book reviews, short stories, interviews, media reports, rants, cartoons, erotica, journals, theory, conversations and letters. You're important to us and what you have to say is important to everyone.

We accept submissions on disk with hard copy (PC), typed, legibly handwritten or by E-mail (nbinw@aol.com). If you send us something to print, you get a free issue; send six and get a year's subscription! Let us know what pseudonym you use, if you do not want to publish under your everyday name.

Views expressed in *North by Northwest* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views of SBWN. Inclusion in this publication does not indicate author's sexual orientation.

Deadline for submissions to the next issue: September 1, 1996

North Bi Northwest is printed on bi paper! (50% recycled)

SBWN Statement of Purpose

We are a group of women from diverse backgrounds working to create a feminist bisexual support network. We promote, in both the heterosexual world and in the lesbian/gay community, the understanding and acceptance of bisexuality as one of many valid sexual identities.

We regard ourselves as part of the community united against heterosexism and homophobia. We are dedicated to the right of all people to define their own sexuality, free from any social, political, or economic coercion. The discriminations we face based on our gender and our sexuality are not the only forms of oppression. We recognize that oppression is nonhierarchical and that none of us is free until all of us are free. We have invested ourselves in the feminist struggle to transform our culture into one free of all forms of bigotry, hatred, and exploitation.

We seek to provide a safe place for women to explore all aspects of their sexual orientation and identity. All women are welcome to attend SBWN activities. We are exclusively a women's group in order to create a safe space for women's expression and leadership. We come together to affirm ourselves and our choices.

North Bi Northwest

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SBWN can always use volunteers to help with a variety of tasks. Give us a call or talk to a facilitator at a meeting.

North Bi Northwest is available by subscription (see above) or at area bookstores and newstands, including: in Seattle, **Red and Black Books, Beyond the Closet, Bailey Coy Books, Fremont Place Book Company,** and **Toys in Babeland.**

North Bi Northwest is a publication of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, a member project of Gay Community Social Services, PO Box 2228, Seattle, WA 98122-0228. *(Not for correspondence with SBWN or North Bi Northwest).*

From the

Editor...

Thank you to all you wonderful people who helped at both Seattle Gay Pride and Kent Gay Pride. We got our name out there again, and the calls have been coming in! Also, for the first time, we had money left over from the items we sold at Seattle Gay Pride. This helps our budget a lot. Mark your calendar now for next year. We have big plans and will need lots of help!

We are also planning to do Aids Walk as a group Sunday, September 22. We need to organize now. Is there anyone out there who would be willing to act as contact and organizer for the event? Please E-mail us at NBINW@AOL.COM or call the phone line at (206)517-7767. You can also call if you want to receive sign-up information - or call Aids Walk direct at (206)323-WALK for a registration card. Hope to see you there!

We have a couple of volunteer positions open we would love to have you fill. Remember, we are a friendly, 100% volunteer organization. It is only with the help of many gracious people that we can survive and thrive.

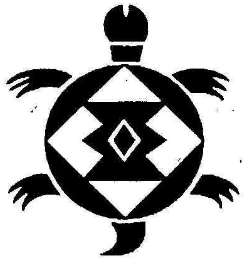
The first, very important position to fill is mine. I will no longer be able to do production on the newsletter after the end of the year due to school and work. Without production we have NO NEWSLETTER! Please call or E-mail us to discuss the duties and requirements of this position. NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED - WILL TRAIN. Please volunteer now so we can have two issues of training time.

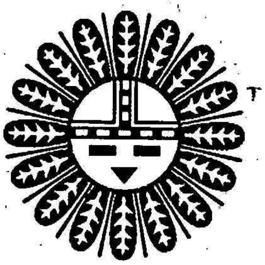
Secondly, we are interested in adding a political summary column for the next issue. Is anyone willing to sort through the bundles of political mail arriving and let us know who the candidates and what the issues are? Come November we want to vote gay-friendly!

We still need a volunteer to take over our finances and relieve Brenda who has put in her share of time - thanks Brenda! And we always need group facilitators, people to take the phone messages, and stories for the newsletter. There are plenty of ways to get involved - so DO IT! It is a great way to meet all sorts of wonderful bi-women!

Hope to hear from you soon!

Julie





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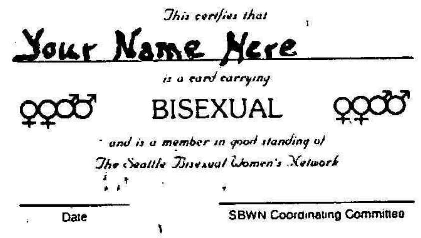

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Memberships are $10-50 a year on a sliding scale, and are open to women everywhere. Members are entitled to discounts on events and purchases. See mail-in form on previous page.

SBWN
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BiNet USA Annual Meeting

The annual meeting for BiNet USA will be held August 16-18 at New College in San Francisco. The schedule includes a reception and Cabaret cultural event Friday evening to be followed by business, skill building meetings and more social events. For more information call 728-4533.

Vancouver Bisexual Conference

A Bisexual Conference will be held in Vancouver, B.C. Saturday, September 7. No other details were available at the time of publication, but please call the SBWN phone line for contact information.

Seattle Sexuality Resources Guide on the Net

Now available on the Internet is the Seattle Sexuality Resources Guide. It contains national & Seattle information on support groups, community services, nightlife, entertainment and more. The Society for Human Sexuality at the University of Washington maintains the page. To receive the guide last updated on June 22, 1996 go to http://weber.u.washington.edu/~sfpse/.

Advertising

North Bi Northwest welcomes advertising from bi-friendly businesses, individuals, organizations and services. Our advertising rates are as follows:

Business card size: $10/issue
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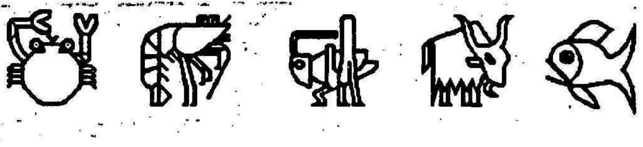

SBWN on the Net

You can now get SBWN calendar and organization information directly from the net. Information on *North Bi Northwest,* including sample articles and subscription information is also available. The site is www.eor.com/sbwn. Check it out and let us know what you think!

South Africa is Gay-Friendly

The new consistitution approved by Nelson Mandela's party includes a clause banning descrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy or marital statutus. It guarantees the right to adequate housing, food, water, education and health care. Way to go!

Ellen Cranswell, Republican Candidate for Governor

Printed in the June issue of the Northwest Gay Times is a letter from Ellen Cranswell, written in response to a voter's question about gay adoptions.

> Dear Sir/Madam:
>
> Thank you for your letter regarding homosexual adoptions. As you know, I oppose special rights for homosexuals. As governor I would prohibit placing children in adoptive or foster homes with homosexuals.
>
> There have been many children already placed in these types of homes by former administrations. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to undo these types of decisions, but I will certainly do my best.
>
> If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff.
>
> Sincerely,
> Ellen Cranswell

Calling All Happy Campers!

by Bonnie Jean

It's summer and you know what that means. Time for another SBWN, womyn only camping trip. Join the fun Friday, August 16 through Sunday, August 18 at Lake Wenatchee State Park near Leavenworth.

Fill you weekend with canoeing, swimming, horseback riding, hot showers, fishing, hiking, eating, games, campfires, s'mores, soaking in HOT SPRINGS, shadow puppets, ghost stories, camp sing-a-longs, good friends, laughter and cheer. Show off your hidden talents at our talent show. Ask anyone who went last year. This is one camping trip you can't miss! Grab your sleeping back and sunscreen and let's go! Call Kellie, Bonnie or the SBWN phone line for more information and to sign up.

Submissions

If you've never been published here, you may not think of North Bi Northwest as your publication, but if you're here, it really is. Even if you don't think of yourself as a writer, we'd like to have your input; this is an SBWN project, not a mainstream magazine. Please help us editors/publishers out. We need input to keep going; we're now in our ninth year!

We welcome fiction, poetry, non-fiction and art. If you send us something to print, you get a free issue; send us six and get a year's subscription! Let us know what pseudonym you use, if you do not want to publish under your everyday name. Also, include a brief biography with each submission.

The deadline for the next issue is Sunday, September 1. Entries should be sent to our PO Box, handed to a newsletter production member at a meeting, or sent by E-mail to nbinw@aol.com. If your submission is not in the following issue, keep looking - we will use submissions as space and content allows.

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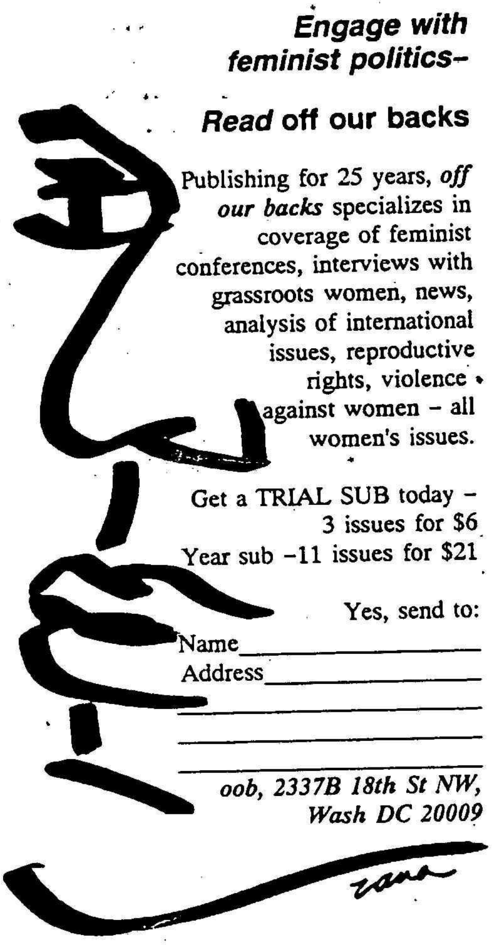

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Continued from page 1

Meredith's office and just talk and never leave. She wanted to let Meredith know how much she meant to her-that Cassandra trusted Meredith with her life, more if she could. But it didn't happen that way. There was no special good-bye; in fact, there wasn't even a good-bye. After Cassandra's office threw her a going away party, Meredith had to leave for another meeting with one of her professors. It was at this time that Cassandra's heart sank. She wanted to cry but couldn't. So she said her good-byes and promised to keep in touch with everyone and walked away from her college life, for what she thought would be forever.

For about a month afterwards all she could do was think about Meredith and how much she wanted to have her special good-bye. Meredith had told Cassandra to give her a call, but Cassandra could not gather up the courage. She also wanted to force herself to not call right away; after all she wanted to prove to everyone that she had moved on, that she had found a new life. Eventually though, Cassandra did make the phone call, and thus their dinners began.

After both of them graduated from college they kept in touch on a regular basis. About every other month or so they would go out to dinner and catch up on everything in their lives. It was during these dinners that they realized they really did have other things to talk about besides their college years. Most of the time they would try to find a quiet corner and just talk for hours, often at times forgetting their meals because they got lost in conversation. Just the they did that day at freshman orientation.

Cassandra valued the dinners tremendously. Whenever they set a date she would think about what to wear weeks in advance, what to say when they first saw each other, what to say during dinner and how they would say good-bye to each other. She wanted these dinners to last forever. Cassandra missed the opportunity to speak to Meredith on a regular basis as she did in college. She missed that sense of connection. To this day she had no idea what it was but it was there, it had to be something.

They had gone out quite a few times when Meredith let her in on a secret. "Cassandra, I feel that I have to tell you something about myself."

"Yes, what is it? You know you can tell me anything."

"I know I can. But I don't know about this. This is just so different from anything we have ever talked about."

"Yeah?"

Cassandra knew it was something serious just from the tone of Meredith's voice. She didn't say anything else because she didn't want to interrupt Meredith. She thought that if sheinterrupted Meredith would stop.

"I'm hoping that what I'm about to tell you won't hurt our relationship. I'm so glad that we have become friends and that we really have gotten to know each other. But I want you to know something else, something I haven't told many people."

"Mm-mm," Cassandra replied.

"Well, where to begin? I guess when I was growing up I always felt different about myself. Like I really didn't belong. I remember all of my girlfriends drooling over the male heartthrobs of the time. I could never quite figure out why this was such a big deal. What was so great about them?

As I got older, I built up friendships with both boys and girls. I remember when two of them started to date. This was the biggest thing that happened in our group. Simone and Greg. Everyone was talking about them. We knew when they had a fight, when they made up and when they called each other. I never could see why she would want to go out with him."

Once again Cassandra replied with a nod and a simple "mm-mm."

"When I got to junior high, I guess that is when you could say I developed an interest in boys. When I was in eighth grade I met this guy named Albert. He wasn't spectacular, but he was fun to hang out with. His brother was going out with one of my friends. Albert was a year older than I was. Becky may have been going out with the better looking of the two, but I was going out with a freshman.

Albert and I hung out with each other all the time. We would go to the movies together or simply watch TV. We used to go for these walks in what was called the bogs. The bogs are an area in the desert that is filled with desert trees. This area was also near by the Rio Grand, which is what caused these trees to grow. You could touch them and they would disintegrate in your hands. These trees are what made the desert much cooler.

On one very warm spring night we were walking through the bogs when we decided to sit down. We started to kiss. He asked if he could unbutton my shirt and I said yes. He started to massage my breasts and kiss them. That night, at the age of 13, I lost my virginity."

Cassandra thought that this was going to lead to a story about an abortion Meredith had had or some other awful experience. But she didn't say anything. She let Meredith continue.

"I remember walking home that night wondering what was so great about sex. I remembered the pain and the blood. I remember Albert on top of me. I remember him coming inside of me. I remember how much I hated it. How much I regretted it, not for the act, but for the fact that I didn't get anything out of it. That it wasn't love, but that it was just him getting off. We eventually drifted apart. That was the one and only time we had sex.

The day after it happened I was talking to my best friend Mindy. We were talking about my experience and about sex in general. She was telling me about all the different kinds of orgasms that a woman could have. I got more excited about her telling me this than I did with Albert. I felt things then that I never thought I could feel. That was the first night I masturbated, the first time I discovered my body. The whole time I was thinking of Mindy."

Cassandra at once knew where this was headed. She wasn't surprised. She had actually thought at times that Meredith was a lesbian, just from the many conversations they had had. Cassandra also felt special after being told this. She knew how difficult it was for people to say this. She knew that Meredith trusted her, and she let her continue with her story.

"When I got to high school I went out with quite a few guys and had sex with all of them. Not once did I get anything from it. I never had an orgasm with them. I just put it off, because I considered them to be the typical guys who didn't care if women were pleased sexually. I never went out with anyone for any real length of time. Many of my female friends did the same thing. I think only two of them had steady boyfriends, so I never thought twice about my lack of satisfaction.

I went through most of my life thinking this. The only times I ever had orgasms were when I was masturbating or when I actively thought about women during sex. I would picture their bodies while they were making love, focusing on them, picturing them and only then would I have an orgasm. All the time though I never realized that something might be amiss, that something just wasn't quite right.

It wasn't until I moved to my apartment about three years ago that I discovered who I might actually be. I would walk home and see lesbians walking through the park holding hands or kissing. I was excited about this. I admired them, not just for the public display of affection but I admired them sexually. I would catch myself staring at women and then go home and think of them while I masturbated.

It was two years ago when I finally had my first sexual encounter with a woman. It was incredible. We came so many times. For the first time in my life I enjoyed sex; I can honestly say that that was the first time I ever made love. It was the most liberating experience of my life.

I am a lesbian. I hope you are okay with this. I felt that you needed to know who I really am."

Cassandra thanked her and said that she appreciated it, that she could understand and did not have any problems with it at all. In fact, Cassandra could relate to Meredith's story very well.

They grew closer because of Meredith's story. Their bond grew deeper and they felt that their relationship had moved to a higher plane.

While reflecting upon Meredith's story Cassandra realized that she could relate to many parts of it. She too, had alienated herself from boys while growing up. She was brought up to believe that girls did girl things and boys did boy things. She also grew up in a neighborhood that was lacking in boys. So naturally, Cassandra always found herself in the company of girls.

There were three girls in particular that Cassandra hung out with on a regular basis. They would do everything together. One of those things was talking about boys. This always seemed natural. After all, this is what they were brought up to do. At first their conversations were about how gross and disgusting they were. But as they got older they started talking about which ones were cute and which ones they intended to marry.

Looking back Cassandra remembered one thing about this moment of her life that she had totally forgotten about-kissing.

When Cassandra and her friends were at this stage in their lives, looking at cute boys, writing their names on their notebooks, and passing little love notes to them, Cassandra remembered what they did in Melanie's room. Cassandra couldn't remember who brought it up first but someone had mentioned kissing boys. At first all of them giggled. After this had subsided Melanie said, "I know how. My sister told me."

Melanie then went into detail and explained all the logistics. They then decided to practice so that if they were ever in a situation where they had to kiss a boy they would be prepared. Alice and Veronica paired up leaving Cassandra and Melanie. The first time they did this they couldn't stop giggling. A couple of weeks later they did this again and were a little more serious.

Cassandra couldn't believe that she had forgotten about all

Continued on page 13

Daphne du Maurier - The Unknown Life of a Writer

by Anna Powell

In all the lists of lesbians and/or bisexual women that have been put out, I have never seen the name Daphne du Maurier. The author of such books as *Rebecca* and *Jamaica Inn*, and the story the movie The Birds came from, seems to have led a secret life.

Daphne in 1929, when sh was having an affair with film director Carol Reed and writing her first novel, The Loving Spirit.

Born May 12, 1907, into the well-known du Maurier family, Daphne was the oldest of three daughters. She was spoiled by her parents, and encouraged to explore all her interests. But she could be sullen and brooding. She had a hidden belief she was a boy, or should have been born a boy. She went so far as to invent an alter-ego, Eric Avon, who was bold and fearless, and did all the things Daphne, as a proper young girl, was not allowed to do. As she approached her teens though, she wondered why she wanted to be a man, since she like women so much more.

She was sent to France at 17 or 18, to finishing school, a common thing among the monied families of the time. While there, she became involved with one of the teachers, Mademoiselle Yvon. This was not the love of Daphne's life, but she did enjoy the attention, and the physical side of the relationship seemed to work for her. But she was always able to keep her head, never giving in to the relationship totally.

Once back in England, Daphne quickly turned to men, and had an affair with Carol Reed, who was in love with her; again, she was very rational about the relationship, and though she cared for him, she did not return the feelings.

She was confused by the roles women and men were expected to follow; this would be a common theme in her writing.

She wrote her first book, *The Loving Spirit*, in 1931, and it was an mmediate success. She quickly followed it with *I'll Never Be Young Again*, and *The Progress of Julius*.

In 1932 she met Frederick "Boy" Browning, and fell in love. It seems this was a romantic love; he loved to sail, and was not easily manipulated by Daphne, as Carol had been. Tommy, as Daphne called him, and she were married three months later. They had 3 children, 2 girls and a boy. Daphne was not very attentive to the girls, but gave all her love and attention to Kits, her son.

Through all this Daphne continued to write. She was published in both England and America, even during World War II. Since Tommy drew only a military salary, she was the major supporter of the family. Tommy thought this was fine, as it allowed him to live the life-style he aspired to. And Daphne didn't mind either, as she feared not having enough for the future, and so wanted as much financial control as possible.

For some years Daphne carried on a relationship with Henry 'Christopher' Puxley; though it was physical, it seems she preferred 'spinning,' or foreplay, to the final sexual act. This was during WWII, while Tommy was making very infrequent visits home, and Daphne was able to rationalize it all.

Once the war was over and Tommy came home, they lived very separate lives, and didn't even share a bedroom. While they still loved each other, they were not able to talk about what was happening between them.

Ellen Doubleday who was the inspiration for September Tide *and* My Cousin Rachel.

Gertrude Lawrence, whose talent for enjoyment endeared her to Daphne.

In 1947 Daphne met Ellen Doubleday, and fell in love. She later told Ellen she became "a boy of eighteen all over again."

Daphne was totally taken with Ellen, and while they became very close, they never had a physical relationship. Ellen was heterosexual; she was pleased with the attention Daphne gave her, and once allowed a kiss, but there was no more to it.

And the boy went back into the box, not to be seen again. Daphne continued to write, but fell back on family histories, not being able to come up with new ideas. She died in April, 1989, at the age of 83.

Daphne never admitted to being a lesbian. She would refer to her own 'Ventian' tendencies (du Maurier slang for lesbian), and of going to 'Vienna' (love between women) and 'Cairo' (male-female sex). But she refused to become an 'L' person - she considered herself to be a half-breed, internally male and externally female. And the term bisexual, not in use at the time, would probably not have been acceptable either.

She thought of herself as being two people; the number-one and the number-two selves. The number-two was the boy-in-the-box, and also the writer. When the boy was finally let out of the box, Daphne's writing took on a different view of the sexes; the women were no longer pathetic and exploited, and the men no longer powerful and dominant. Women manipulated men, and could even murder them now.

Daphne would not have called herself a feminist either; she felt she had gone against nature by having a career and a family. She thought women should have to choose, between working or marrying. But the fact is, she didn't need to make that choice.

As a result of this relationship, Daphne wrote the play *September Tide*; the main character was a heavily disguised Ellen, or more likely the Ellen Daphne wished for. Gertrude Lawrence played the lead; at first Daphne thought this was a poor choice, and made fun of Gertrude and criticized the actress's work. But between the role Gertrude was playing, and the woman herself, Daphne became attracted to her. While Gertie was married, she was flexible about the gender of the people she slept with, and eventually the two women became lovers.

Daphne on the rocks below Kilmarth in the '70s, wearing the clothes and cap which became almost a uniform.

Their relationship lasted four years, until Gertie died very suddenly, in 1952. Daphne grieved terribly. Her family did not know the extent of her relationship with Gertie, and so were very concerned over why she was taking it so hard.

Daphne du Maurier: The Secret Life of the Renowned Storyteller, by Margaret Forster. Doubleday, 1996.

Growing Pains: The Shaping of a Writer, by Daphne du Maurier. ©1977.

The Road to Marderley: Daphne du Maurier's Haunted Houses, by Carol Arshaw. Voice Literary Supplement, Dec 1993.

Menstruation in History

by Leilani

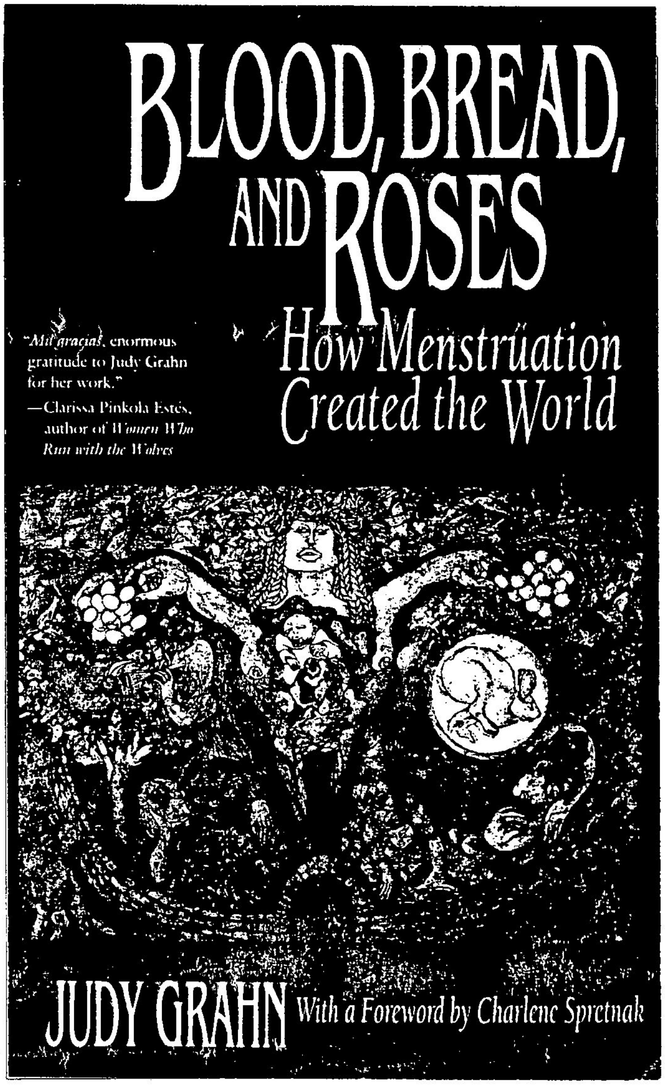
Blood, Bread and Roses
How Menstruation Created the World
by Judy Grahn
published by Beacon Press ©1993 Boston, MA

I was really fortunate to be browsing my local women's book store in Kent, and this book jumped off the shelf into my hands. It has taken me several months to finish because I've been savoring it like a decadent dessert each night before bed.

This book opened my mind to re-see our male-oriented, male-defined, and male-created world. Detailed example after example outline menstruation created principles that created the World as we know it. Early man was brought out of chaos (darkness) into knowing the separation of light and cycles. Tracking the cycles of menstruation and the moon made the logical progression of counting and shapes. Women's menstrual symbols became both tradition and fashion. Finally, Grahn looks at how male blood took power and the way back to balance. This is an entirely alternate cultural history that reclaims the reason and ritual around our bodies and blood.

Judy Grahn's "intriguing excursion through folklore, myth, religion, anthropology, and history bespeaks a feminist conviction that male origin stories must be balanced by a recognition of women's central role in shaping civilization."
— Publisher's Weekly

If you enjoyed *Women Who Run With Wolves* by Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Ph.D. and wanted more: more historical accounts, language studies, and more personal stories; this is the book.


BLOOD, BREAD, AND ROSES
How Menstruation Created the World
"Mil gracias, enormous gratitude to Judy Grahn for her work."
—Clarissa Pinkola Estés, author of Women Who Run with the Wolves
JUDY GRAHN
With a Foreword by Charlene Spretnak

"Miss Otis Regrets"

by Sydne Brewer

She waited until she was sitting down before reading the letter. "Miss Otis regrets she's unable to lunch today madam," it began. "She is sorry to be delayed . . ."

Delayed - ha! Daliah Watston knew Miss Otis would not make lunch today or any day. Poor Miss Otis, she thought as the tears began to well up in her eyes. Oh, poor Miss Otis! Her tears breached the brim of her lower lids and landed on the note, mixing with the ink and making it unreadable. No matter. She knew exactly why Miss Otis would not be coming to her own party today. Poor Miss Otis, God rest her soul.

Miss Otis had come to Chicago when she was just nineteen years old. The year was 1952. She was singing at a club in Memphis one night when Daliah's brother, Red, sauntered in. Miss Otis was in the middle of her Billie Holiday set and Red knew right away he'd found a gem. You see, Miss Otis could sing Billie Holiday like, well, like Billie Holiday. And a song can't get much better treatment than that.

Miss Otis hadn't seen many men like Red before, him waltzing into the club with his double-breasted pin-striped suit, his smart felt hat and his wing tipped shoes. She'd never seen anyone so fine. His hair, which did in fact have a reddish tint, was shaved close on the sides and cut flat on top, short in the back and sloping up towards the front where it stood tall. Looks kind of like a ramp, she thought. Definitely one of them city hairdos. He had a goatee around thick black lips that spread into a wide smile when he looked at her. "You got a voice like sweet, warm honey dripping down off a hot biscuit," Red said as he showed her more money than she'd ever seen. He stared into her eyes, straight through to her soul, and told her he'd make her famous.

She believed him; Miss Otis was already sappy in love.

She didnt know then that he carried a gun - a shiny, pearl-handled revolver was strapped tight in a shoulder holster under that spanking new suit he wore - but it probably wouldn't have mattered. You see, not ten minutes after Miss Otis sat down with Red at that little table at the back of the bar, before she took more than a sip or two from the glass of whisky she cradled in her hands, she was not only in love, she was convinced Red was her ticket out. A way out of this seedy joint, out of the house with the babies crying and her mama's drinking and her daddy's hitting. Away from the dirt roads, the endless cotton fields, the stale, dry air and the muddy rivers. All the way to Chicago. To the big city where a girl got treated like a lady and where Red would make her dreams come true.

She left with him that night. Miss Otis didn't even go home to say goodbye.

As they drove to Chicago, Red told her about the man he worked for, and about his connections, though he didn't tell her everything. He'd buy her new clothes when they got to the city, whatever she wanted. And she'd sing in the best clubs. Then, as soon as she had a band, she'd be recording her first album.

That was two years ago, and while things hadn't gone as quickly or as smoothly as Red promised, Miss Otis had not been disillusioned. Not yet, anyhow. She had been living with Red, the first man she'd ever loved and the first man whose bed she'd shared, and she thought she was living a dream. She was singing whatever, wherever and whenever she wanted. Always the center of attention, she wore fancy clothes and fine jewelry, went to parties and was living the good life.

She wasn't stupid. She knew Red was a gangster and what kind of "work" he did. Not the details, but she knew. Sometimes she got scared, like the time Red took her away for three weeks saying, "It's just a vacation but we have to go *now* woman, no time to pack!" But being scared also made her tough.

Lately, things had changed; Red had been acting different. Some nights he didn't come home until early in the morning, and sometimes he didn't come home at all. Once when he didn't come home she waited for him, hiding behind the door with the knife she'd used to cut up the chicken she'd made him for dinner that night. When he came in she pointed the knife at him and accused him of having another lover. She said she would kill him if he did. He easily wrestled the knife from her, then set about tearing up the apartment. But he didn't lay a hand on Miss Otis. Instead, he broke down and cried, told her he loved her, then begged her to believe him that it wasn't true.

What could she do? She loved him. Loved him as much as she loved singing. So she stayed. And so it was that the following week Miss Otis found herself sitting on a wooden bench in a cold jail cell, explaining to a guard that he must get a note to Daliah Watson as to why she wouldn't be able to lunch today. Why she wouldn't make the party Daliah was having for her.

Red had given her the news the day before - Miss Otis had just got her first recording contract. They went out that night to celebrate. Miss Otis got so drunk that Red had to carry her in from the car when they got home. She passed out on the bed and woke up in the middle of the night. Red was gone.

She got a cab and went to Lover's Lane. Demanding to see the hotel register she recognized Red's signature. He'd signed in as a Mr. George Washington. Cute. She gave the clerk a $100 bill for the extra key, opened the door to room 206 and found Red there in the bed with his face buried between some woman's big, black thighs. He jumped up as she calmly lifted her red velvet dress. From her garter belt she drew a gun. "Red, I loved you," she said, then proceeded to shoot him in the chest.

The next day, as she asked the guard to please get a note to Daliah Watson, the mob came and dragged her from the jail. She didn't say a word. Didn't cry, scream, kick or beg as they hauled her to the park across the way. She wouldn't even look at them. Even when they threw a rope over the branch of the old willow, stood her on an old crate and slipped a noose around her neck she didn't look. Someone pulled the slack out of the rope and tied it off. And just before they kicked the crate out from under her, Miss Otis lifted up her lovely head and looked at the faces of the men who were about to kill her.

A single tear slid down her cheek.

Inspired by the song "Miss Otis Regrets," written by Cole Porter and performed by Ella Fitzgerald.

My lover. . .

by Artemis

I keep thinking I'm smelling you on me
    in my hair
    on my hands
    in my mouth
I can close my eyes for but a moment
There where we shared and surrendered
Tere was nothing but you in all the world
Having let go of the rest
    I could only feel you
    your soft sensuous body
your warm brown eyes smiling at me
In your gentle embrace I forgot to be
    self-conscious
I felt at peace, connected
I am now feeling my treasure of little
    aches and relishing each one
The remind me of the passion and life
    you ignite in me
And how good you felt to me
My hair and face matted with the mixing
    of my mouth to your wetness
My fingers pressing, searching, wrinkling
    inside you
The flowing from between my legs
My heart pounding, bursting inside
Alive, alive with desire
Desire grown in the light of your
    beauty nourished by your
    gentle loving spirit

What Do I Know of Love?

by Leilani

Love is the way when I touch someone I sense their emotions
    and memories.
Love is how I take their pain into myself and let it go back
    to the Universe.
Love is the warm glow in my eyes that surrounds me and
    carries me.
When I look out into the World with eyes of love, I bless
    everyone and everything I touch.
Love is the source. . .

It is as though, there is no origin place to love, but rather it is shared. A meeting place wthat I may enter thinking my companion will be there, but arrive and see I'm alone; or that I may have come in as a couple and now, I am no longer able to find by companion. I have at times, lost myself and wondered when did I leave love.

I count myself very fortunate to share a love, to know a joy and tenderness unique to our love. When I entered love, he was there waiting.

Continued from page 7

of this. She did remember everything else they did but she couldn't quite figure out why this detail of her life she forgot.

It was about three months after Cassandra and her friends had practiced kissing when Melanie came over. Cassandra's parents were out shopping and as usual the two of them started to read magazines and talk about boys.

"You know what else my sister told me that boys and girls do?"

"No, what?"

"Well you see after they kiss they do all sorts of things."

"What sort of things?"

"Here let me show you."

The two of them started to kiss as they did at Melanie's a few months ago. Cassandra was getting used to kissing Melanie and was beginning to enjoy it. Melanie then pulled away and said, "Then the boy puts his hands under your shirt like this." Melanie demonstrated this on Cassandra and instructed her to do the same to Melanie. Cassandra did.

Cassandra liked the way this felt and also enjoyed touching Melanie the same way, but she didn't say this out loud. Then the two of them giggled and joked around about how disgusting it was. Before Melanie went home they pledged never to tell anyone about what they did. As far as Cassandra knew that pledge was never broken.

She wondered what happened to Melanie. Did Melanie ever think about that afternoon or did she forget it just like Cassandra. Was what they did so bad that they could never talk about it, not even remember it?

Cassandra continued to reflect upon her high school years and realized that she never really dated anyone. In her mind she was still doing what girls did but she ignored what the boys did. She always hung out with a group of girls that never really fit in with anyone. They used to joke around with themselves and call their group the misfits.

None of them belonged or wanted to belong to any of the other groups at school. None of them were spectacular looking like all of the popular girls. None of them heavily drank or cut class like the losers. None of them really dated anyone during high school.

They weren't nerds, but they always did well in school. They were just good friends who never went out with any guys. Nobody thought this was strange. They were just nice people who got along with everybody.

This was pretty much how Cassandra spent most of her college years, hanging out with a small group of female friends and not really dating anyone. Her excuse was that there wasn't anyone worth going out with at her college. She enjoyed her college years and hung out with her good, female friends, including Meredith.

Cassandra would often replay that night in her mind, putting herself in Meredith's place and wondering if she too was a lesbian. There were times when she did doubt her sexuality. She didn't know too many lesbians. Including Meredith she only knew three, but they never really talked about what made them lesbians. While thinking about Meredith, she started to massage her breasts, to run her hands all over her body. Almost unconsciously she began to remove her clothes and started to masturbate.

For the first time she had the most incredible orgasm, all the while thinking of Meredith.

She finally realized how much she was missing in her life. Cassandra felt so confident when thinking about being with another woman, it had to be the right thing for her. It would just explain so much about her alienation from men, of just not needing them. It wasn't that she never went out or had sex with them. She just felt that she didn't need to.

They went out a few more times before Meredith invited Cassandra over to her place for dinner. Meredith wanted to show her what a home cooked meal looked like. Cassandra made it a habit not to go into the kitchen too often. She only went in it for her morning tea and her microwave dinners every night. Other than that Cassandra had no need to be in there. Meredith got the idea that Cassandra could use a trip into a kitchen and even help out. This, of course, did not happen. Cassandra had no idea what Meredith was talking about when she mentioned types of knives and other assorted kitchen utensils. Meredith eventually removed Cassandra from the kitchen.

They ate dinner and sat on the sofa afterwards and talked. Cassandra enjoyed this. As usual the conversation went on for hours. When they both realized the time Cassandra had missed the last train from Grand Central by two hours. Meredith invited Cassandra to stay the night. When the conversation hit a lull Cassandra asked for a tour of Meredith's apartment.

Meredith had a three bedroom apartment on the Lower East Side, somewhat near Washington Square Park. It wasn't a large apartment but it wasn't small either. Meredith started the tour from the kitchen that Cassandra was thrown out of earlier. The tour progressed to the office that Meredith used and then to the guest room where Cassandra would be sleeping. The last stop on the tour was Meredith's room.

Cassandra had noticed Meredith's CD collection and inquired about it. They both walked over to take a look when Meredith suggested that Cassandra pick out something to listen to. They started to sing and dance around to the CD. They started making fun of some of their friends when they danced causing them to burst out into wild laughter. They were laughing so hard that they both collapsed on the bed holding their stomachs.

"My stomach hurts so much, I think I'm going to be sick

Continued on next page

if I laugh anymore," Cassandra said.

Meredith rolled on to her side still laughing a bit and started to rub Cassandra's stomach. Her stomach tightened at her touch. She closed her eyes and held her breath.

"You know I've been thinking a lot about you lately," Cassandra said.

"Really? How?"

"About how much I want to be with you."

As Cassandra was saying this Meredith's hand started to move closer to Cassandra's breasts. Cassandra started to breathe more heavily.

"Do you want me to do this?"

"Yes," Cassandra replied.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes. No. I don't know what I want."

"But you just said that you wanted to be with me."

"I do, but I just don't know yet. This is happening way too fast. I'm sorry but I have to leave."

Cassandra quickly got up and frantically started gathering her things. She was so confused. She felt her head spinning. She wanted to stay-felt that it was right. She thought it was too soon. She didn't know what to think.

Meredith followed her to the living room. Where are you going to go? You missed your train. You have no way of getting home."

"I don't know. I just can't stay here."

"Look don't leave, please. I'm sorry if I pressured you or made you feel uncomfortable. Stay in the guest room. I won't bother you. Just please stay."

"Meredith, I believe you. I'm sorry, but I just can't stay. I have to go. I'll be okay. I'll call you in the morning."

"Please don't."

"I need to."

With that Cassandra was out the door and facing Washington Square Park. She didn't know what to do so she just started walking. She didn't know where to go and whom she could turn to. Everything just kept leading back to Meredith. No, she could not go back now.

She wandered by the New York University Information Center and just kept walking straight. The cool night air felt good and refreshed her. She was able to think a bit more clearly now. She kept thinking about how comfortable she felt with Meredith lying next to her, touching her. Then she panicked. Why? Why did she panic? Everything felt right. Cassandra felt alive for the first time.

When she reached Astor Place she went into a 24 hour deli and got some coffee. When she got outside again she sat down on a bench and tried to put things into perspective. She was worried about her friendship with Meredith. Surprisingly enough this is why she panicked. Everything else about herself she was comfortable with. It was losing a good friend that bothered her the most.

If she had stayed with Meredith everything would change. Yet fleeing from Meredith would change everything also. Still thinking about all of this Cassandra got up and started walking again. She had to do something, but what?

It was approaching dawn and Cassandra was walking very slowly, in fact strolling. She was not conscious of where she was and had stopped thinking a while ago. She was tired and needed to rest. What would she tell Meredith when she called?

Cassandra stopped walking and looked up. She was in front of Meredith's building. She didn't remember walking here. She stood in front of the building staring straight ahead. A feeling of calm filled her as it had always done in the presence of Meredith.

She looked up to what she thought was Meredith's floor and was convinced that a light was on inside. She slowly climbed the stairs and rang the buzzer. It seemed like years before Meredith acknowledged it.

"Hello?"

"Meredith it's me. Can I come in?"

"Of course, of course."

Meredith buzzed Cassandra in and within minutes she was inside Meredith's apartment. They hugged each other like long lost friends. Soon they were kissing each other.

"Where were you all this time?"

"Just walking and walking."

"Are you sure this time? You can always stop me if you start to feel uncomfortable."

"Please don't stop," Cassandra begged.

Meredith started to move her hands over Cassandra's breasts and leaned over to kiss them through her shirt. Cassandra started to stroke Meredith's hair and pulled her back up to her lips. Meredith moved closer and they started to kiss again. Cassandra was really excited, this felt so right to her. Holding onto her very tight, Meredith lead Cassandra into the bedroom.

Meredith started to move her hands to Cassandra's waist and unbuttoned Cassandra's jeans, then lowered her onto the bed. Her hand found its way in between her legs causing Cassandra to moan. She started to pull off Meredith's shirt. Meredith got up and took off her clothes and released Cassandra of hers.

Later that morning when Cassandra woke Meredith was already taking a shower. Cassandra got up and wandered around the apartment for a while. She got the newspaper and started to read it. By this time Meredith was finished with her shower and came out to make some breakfast.

"How do you feel?" Meredith asked.

"Great! I'm sorry for the way I acted earlier. I just couldn't comprehend everything so quickly. I didn't want to ruin anything we had, but I wanted more. I just needed to breathe, to escape for a while. I just wandered around until I found myself back here and then I knew.

"So you don't regret anything?"

"No, only that I waited this long."

Meredith walked into the kitchen to finish making her breakfast. When she was finished she came out and sat on the arm of the sofa where Cassandra was sitting. When Cassandra looked up at Meredith, Meredith smiled and started to feed her some oatmeal. Some of it had spilled onto Cassandra's chin.

When Cassandra tried to reach for the napkin in Meredith's hand she was stopped by Meredith licking the oatmeal off her chin. Their lips met once again and Cassandra said, "I never knew oatmeal could taste so good."

Meredith started to laugh and replied, "Neither did I."

Stacey Cooper is a non-fiction writer by day and fiction writer by night. She is currently the Editorial/Internet Coordinator for The New York Cooperator, a monthly magazine for the co-op and condo community in New York City. Torn between the two writing styles Stacey constantly finds herself in front of a computer for nearly 24 hours a day. Stacey will have another story published in Lavendar Life by the end of the year. She periodically makes pit stops at scoops@interport.net.

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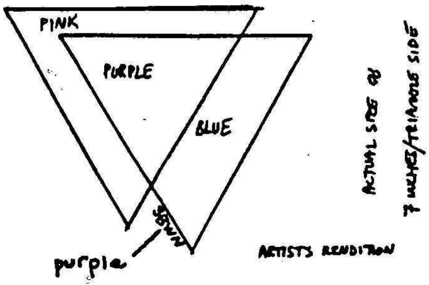

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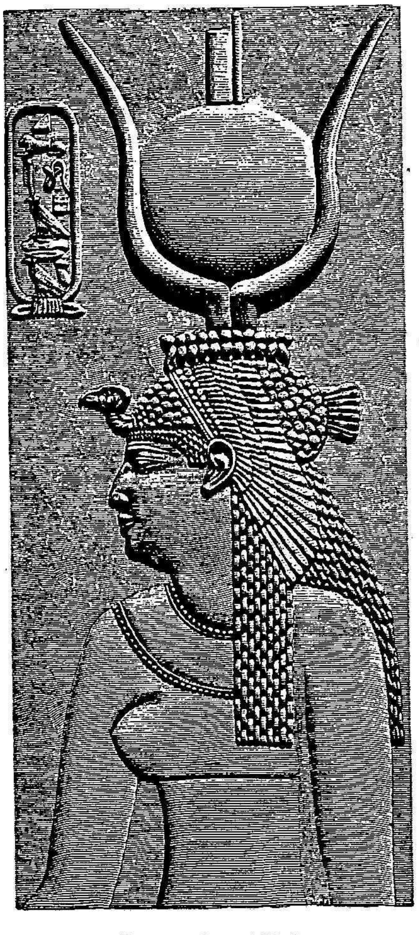

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MEMBER ABMP

CALENDAR

For locations, confirmations, or more information, call the appropriate message machine and someone will get back to you (with discretion if requested). For **SBWN** events call **(206)517-7767**. For all other Seattle events, (**BiNet, SBMU, Polyfi, BiOut**, etc.) Call (206)728-4533.

***denotes mulit-gender events. $=not a free event**

Sat. Aug 3 - **BiNet Mtg. 6:30pm**

Mon. Aug 5 - **SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm.**
Open Rap.

Sun. Aug 11 - **SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm.** *Topic Night - TBA*

Mon. Aug 12 - **SBMU Mtg. 7pm.**

Fri. Aug 16 - Sun. Aug. 18 - **BiNet USA** meeting in San Francisco. See page 5 for more information.

Fri. Aug 16 - Sun. Aug. 18 - **SBWN Social:** *Camping Trip to Lake Wenatchee State Park. See page 5 for details.*

Mon. Aug 19 - **SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm.**
Nonpracticing bisexual - monogamy?

Sun. Aug 25 - **SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm.**
Open Rap

Tue. Aug 27 - **BiNet Movie Night 6:30pm.** Bay Theater in Ballard. Call 728-4533 for details.

Mon. Sept 2 - **SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm.**
Open Rap

Mon. Sept 2 - **Input deadline** for *North Bi Northwest* October/November Issue: 'Coming Out.'

Sat. Sept 7 - **BiNet Mtg. 6:30pm.**

Sun. Sept 8 - **SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm.**
Social and Organizational Meeting

Mon. Sept. 10 - **SBMU Mtg. 7pm.**

Mon. Sept. 16 - **SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm.**
Topic night - TBA

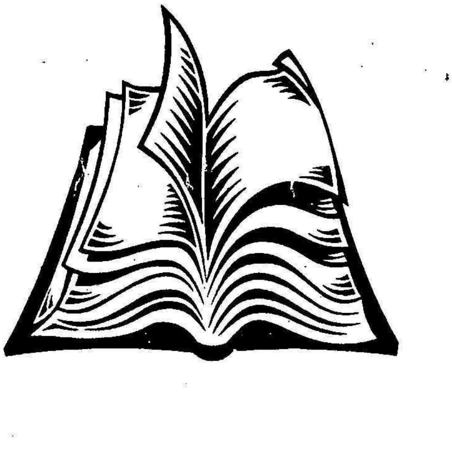
Sat. Sept 14 - **Polyfidelity potluck** 6:30pm, Pilgrim Congregational Church.

Sun. Sept 22 - Aids Walk. See page 5 for details on joining SBWN walkers.

Sun. Sept 22 - **SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm.**
Open Rap & North Bi Northwest collating/ mailing

Tue. Sept 24 - **BiNet Movie Night 6:30pm.** Bay Theater in Ballard. Call 728-4533 for details.

Mon. Sept 30 - **SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm.**
Open Rap



* * *

PEOPLE NEEDN'T BE BISEXUAL TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THE ABOVE GROUPS; ONE NEEDS ONLY TO BE NON-BI-HOSTILE, AND OUGHT TO BE AT LEAST A BIT ENTERTAINING AND FRIENDLY.

Local Groups at your Service

SBWN (Seattle Bisexual Women's Network): Support and discussion groups on alternate Sundays and alternate Mondays at 6:30pm. For more information, call our message machine. Note our NEW telephone number: 517-7767.

SBWN's Social Crowd meets on the first Friday of the month for dancing at Sappho's, 9:30pm. And on the third Saturday of the month for dancing at The Easy, 10pm. All are welcome.

SBMU (Seattle Bisexual Men's Union): a men's anti-sexist support and social group with discussion meetings on second Mondays of the month at Pilgrim Congregational Church, room 304 (enter from 10th Ave.), and monthly social events (location varies).

Polyfidelity Discussion Group: Support group and community for people in or interested in multipartner relationships. Discussions and literature on responsible nonmonogamy, intimate networks, alternative relationships and community. Bimonthly potluck discussions, 6:30pm @ Pilgrim Congregational Church, 509 10th Ave E, Seattle; alternate month social events, venue varies.

BiNet, the Bisexual Network of Seattle: multi-gender, multicultural profeminist group. Meets the first Saturday of every month . Also, movie night on the last Tuesdy of every month at the Bay Theater in Ballard. Call 728-4533 to get involved.

BiOut Speakers Bureau: available for engagements at schools, businesses, counseling centers, churches, etc. to provide information and answers about bisexuality.

1996 OPINION SURVEY

Seattle Commission for Lesbians and Gays

The Seattle Commission for Lesbians and Gays (SCLG) is a 15-member commission appointed by the Mayor and City Council. The SCLG provides information and recommends policies and legislation to Seattle's elected officials and departments on issues of significance to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered persons. The SCLG is conducting this survey about our community's priorities and related issues to help in the creation of our 1997 workplan.

Please help us by taking a moment to fill out this questionnaire.

1. Demographics

a. Gender

○ Female
○ Male

b. Orientation/Identity

(check any which apply)

○ Bisexual
○ Lesbian
○ Gay
○ Transgendered
○ Straight

c. Age

○ 12-19 years
○ 20-24 years
○ 25-34 years
○ 35-44 years
○ 45-60 years
○ over 60 years

d. Race (check one)

○ Asian/Pacific-American
○ African-American/Black
○ Hispanic/Latino
○ Caucasian
○ Native American
○ Middle Eastern
○ Alaskan Native
○ Mixed race
○ Other ______________________

e. Yearly income

○ less than $15,000
○ $15,000-$24,999
○ $25,000-$34,999
○ $35,000-$49,999
○ $50,000-$80,000
○ more than $80,000

f. Education

○ have not graduated from high school
○ high school diploma or equivalent
○ some college, but no degree
○ bachelor's degree
○ graduate degree
○ professional degree/certificate

g. Zip code of current residence

____

---

2. Which City of Seattle Departments and Offices have you had contact with in the last 12 months? (Check all that apply)

○ Mayor
○ Office of Management and Planning
○ Office of Economic Development
○ Office for Women's Rights
○ Department of Neighborhoods
○ Law Department
○ Municipal Court
○ Finance Department
○ Construction and Land Use
○ City Council
○ City Clerk
○ Ethics and Elections Commission
○ Seattle Water Department
○ Seattle City Light
○ Seattle Police Department
○ Seattle Fire Department
○ Engineering Department
○ Human Rights Department
○ Seattle Commission for Lesbians and Gays
○ Public Health Department
○ Seattle Public Library
○ Civil Service Commission
○ Personnel Department
○ Seattle Arts Commission
○ Dept. of Parks/Recreation
○ Office of Neighborhood Planning
○ City Auditor's Office
○ none of the above

---

3. What do you believe are the 3 top priorities facing Seattle's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) community?

○ Domestic violence within the LGBT community
○ Safety of LGBT persons on the street
○ Safety of LGBT youth in schools
○ Support for LGBT parents and their children
○ Relations with police
○ Prevention of suicide of LGBT youth
○ Issues facing aging and elderly LGBTs
○ Economic security
○ Access to LGBT-friendly health care
○ Health care issues for sexual minorities of color
○ Health care for lesbians
○ HIV/AIDS
○ Strengthening and supporting our relationships
○ Same-sex marriage
○ Access to affordable and non-discriminatory housing
○ Access to a LGBT Community Center
○ Increasing access to Seattle's elected officials and decision makers
○ Other (please list) ______________________________

____

____

4. Please identify any concerns that you may have about the issues raised in questions 2 and 3.

OPTIONAL

Are you willing to volunteer your time to assist with SCLG activities? ○ YES ○ NO
May we keep you posted about our activities and progress? ○ YES ○ NO

Name
Address
Phone

SURVEY

Place
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Here

Please return to:
Ramona Fisher
Office for Women's Rights
700 Third Avenue, Suite 220
Seattle, WA 98104